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SUBJECT: January 2010 Caracas CIWG

CLASSIFIED BY: Andres Barcenaz, ARSO, Dept. of State, RSO Caracas;  
REASON: 1.4(G)

(SBU) On January 5, 2010 Caracas held its bi-annual Counterintelligence Working Group (CIWG) meeting to review current threat levels and countermeasures, to discuss recent CI activity and establish post policy on use of FOBs and Opennet Blackberries. In attendance for the meeting were representatives from MSG, POL, MGT, RSO, DHS, LEGAT, DEA, CONS, ESO, ECON, DAO/Milgroup, ORA and IMO. The DCM chaired the meeting.

(S/NF) RSO stated the current threat levels for post and stressed that Caracas is critical and high in 4 of the 6 threat categories. RSO and other sections confirmed that Venezuelan Intelligence Services (Directorate of Military Intelligence-DIM and the Bolivarian Intelligence Service-SEBIN formerly DISIP) are conducting HUMINT and TECH operations against Embassy staff, as well as political opposition leaders and are controlled by the Cuban Intelligence Service operating in Venezuela. While the collection priority appears to be for political opposition leaders, RSO reminded everyone that the VIS have the capability, means and desire to monitor and target Embassy staff.

(SBU) During a review of the current threat levels RSO and SEO stressed the requirement that locally engaged staff without security clearances must be escorted at all times in the CAA. This includes the front entrance of the 5th floor area near the elevators. LE Staff must not be left unattended in that area.

(SBU) RSO reminded Section heads when having staff meetings with local employees (non-cleared Americans) inside CAA locations the Section Head MUST compartmentalize all information and only discuss unclassified information in their presence. In addition SEO explained the standards for introducing electronic or new items into CAA locations and reiterated that no computers or other electronic items are allowed in CAA unless they have been sent securely to Post through the classified pouch system and controlled at all times. Personal items must be screened and tagged by the SEO before entering the CAA areas. This standard applies to all agencies and staff, PSC or TDY. SEO is working with MGT to send out a management notice to all staff reminding them of proper procurement procedures for CAA locations.

(SBU) RSO reiterated to all Section heads the Department policy and guidelines for Foreign Contact Reporting and encouraged all Section Heads to review the contact reporting policy with all Cleared Americans in their sections. In addition RSO reminded staff that contact reporting is required for all personal social engagements with locally engaged staff from the Embassy. RSO will resubmit the Mission Security Notice on Foreign Contact Reporting next week as a

reminder to all staff.

(SBU) As part of Post Debriefing Program, RSO expects DS TDY support from Washington in March/April to assist with the Annual Security Briefings for all Embassy staff. RSO will hold another debriefing review this month for all cleared-American staff arriving at post over the last 90 to 120 days.

(S) RSO stressed the need to establish a clear post policy on the issuance of FOBs and Opennet Blackberries. IMO stated that currently only cleared American staff have been issued FOBs and Blackberries, but a few sections have stated the need for a FSN to carry Blackberries. It was agreed that the CIWG will review all requests for FOBS and Blackberries and will determine if the need and stated justification should be approved or denied. The CIWG discussed the pros and cons of FOB use within Venezuela and on home computers. The CIWG affirmed that FOBs should remain issued only to cleared American staff (Further review of the Department guidelines and requirements states that based on Caracas' threat level cleared American staff must only use the FOBS on computers that meet all the Department required security guidelines.) The CIWG determined that individuals assigned FOBs should evaluate their need and use discretion of the FOB only when the work cannot be completed at the Embassy (perhaps only Unclass and not SBU). Cleared Americans issued FOBs should receive an additional briefing from the ISSO and the RSO to discourage frivolous use of the FOB, with a review of what constitutes SBU, especially for non-State Agencies.

(SBU) Point of contact for this cable is ARSO Andres Barcenas and RSO Wendy Bashnan, telephone number 58-212-907-8403. Regards.